

Ontario Bird Records Committee Report for 2008

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Introduction

The Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) evaluates documentation it receives of any record of a species or recognizable form that is on the Review List for Ontario (see www.ofo.ca). In addition, it reviews documentation relating to new species, new subspecies, and new breeding species for the province. This 27th annual report details the results of the adjudication of 113 records by the OBRC during 2008, of which 106 (94%) were accepted.

A total of 121 observers submitted documentation for review by the 2008 Committee. Written reports were often accompanied by photographs (mostly digital images, but also a few prints), as well as field notes and sketches.

As noted in recent years, the trend toward submission of only photographic evidence, with little or no supporting written evidence, is an ongoing problem.

This makes it much more difficult for the Committee to compile dates of occurrence. In addition, many details and circumstances associated with an observation, such as behaviour, comparisons to nearby birds and vocalizations, cannot be determined from photographic evidence alone. As such, we urge observers to submit written reports with their images submitted to OBRC. For those submitting photos to the Ontario Field Ornithologists (OFO) website, please send the same photos, along with written documentation, directly to the OBRC Secretary. That being said, the OBRC reserves the right to use, as evidence, photographs that have been posted on the OFO website.

Guidance regarding the documentation of rare birds can be found on the OBRC page of the OFO website (www.ofo.ca/obrc/guidelines.php).

The members of the 2008 Committee were: William J. Crins, Robert Z. Dobos, Jean Iron, Blake A. Mann, Mark K. Peck (also serving as Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) liaison), Ian M. Richards (non-voting Secretary), Ronald G. Tozer, and Alan Wormington (also serving as Assistant to the Secretary) (Figure 1).

Two new species, Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) and Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*), are added to the provincial list, bringing the total to 482 species. In addition, southern Ontario has now recorded its first Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*), while northern Ontario had its first records of both Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) and Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*).

Figure 1: Ontario Bird Records Committee for 2008. Left to right, back row: Ian Richards, Alan Wormington, Blake Mann, Bill Crins, Rob Dobos; front row: Ron Tozer, Jean Iron, Mark Peck. Photo: Mark Cranford.



Listing of Records

In the following species accounts, the total number of accepted records is indicated by a single number in parentheses. Accepted records are arranged taxonomically by their English and scientific names, following the Seventh Edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (AOU 1998) and subsequent supplements (42nd to 49th; see www.aou.org/checklist/north/print.php). Date of occurrence, number of birds, sex, plumage, and location are provided when known. Place names in italics refer to a county, regional municipality or district in Ontario; they also appear in colour. The plumage terminology used here follows that of Humphrey and Parkes (1959). For a detailed explanation of plumage and moult terminology, see Pit-taway (2000). The names of all contributors of documentation are listed, while

those contributors who are known to be the discoverers of the bird are also underlined. Additional discoverers of the bird are also listed (if known), even if they did not submit documentation. The OBRC file number is shown in parentheses at the end of each record.

The Committee attempts to verify documented information prior to the acceptance and publication of a record, but occasionally inaccuracies will occur. Anyone with pertinent information that would correct or strengthen a published record, such as dates of occurrence, number of birds, plumages, location, discoverers, etc., is urged to communicate this to the Secretary.

All records that were not accepted because of uncertain identification or questionable origin are listed separately. Contributors of all “not accepted” reports receive a letter from the Chairperson explaining the reasons for the decision, along with copies of the comments written by voting members.

These reports, as well as documentation for all accepted records, are kept on permanent file at the ROM. A “not accepted” report can be reconsidered by the OBRC if new evidence, in the form of additional documentation, is submitted to the Committee for review. Researchers and other interested individuals are welcome to examine any of the filed reports at the ROM, by appointment only. Please contact Mark K. Peck, Department of Natural History, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen’s Park,

Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C6 (e-mail: markp@rom.on.ca or telephone 416-586-5523).

Acknowledgements

The OBRC appreciates the efforts of the numerous observers who took the time to submit documentation of their observations of rare birds for consideration by the 2008 Committee. We also thank the following people who assisted the Committee in acquiring additional data and other material evidence that supplemented the information submitted directly by observers and Committee members, or by providing expert opinions on evidence submitted to the Committee: Kenneth F. Abraham, Margaret J.C. Bain, Pierre Bannon, Jean Claude Bermond, Jon L. Dunn, Nicholas G. Escott, Jean-Francois Giroux, Michel Gosselin, Karl R. Konze, Tony Leukering, Mark W. Lockwood, Steve Mlodinow, Ronald J. Pittaway, Peter Pyle, Steve Percival, Brian D. Ratcliff, Gordon Ross, Diane Salter, Louise Schmidt, Roy B.H. Smith, Kim Toews, Brian Wheeler, John M. Woodcock and Doug Woods.

OntBirds, the listserv of the Ontario Field Ornithologists, continues to be a useful source of information pertaining to rare birds that appear in the province; it is moderated by Mark H. Cranford. In addition, the photographic pages on the OFO website, maintained in 2008 by Frank Horvath and Sandra Horvath, provide an excellent source of documentation for rarities. These sources of information make the Secretary’s job of securing documentation much more efficient. During 2008, Alan Wormington, in his role as Assistant to the Secretary, provided valuable assistance in tracking down documentation for reports. I also wish to thank the members of the 2008 Committee for their support and assistance during the year.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

South Only Before 1998 (56)

1994 – one, juvenal, 30 November, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (found by Kevin D. Clark, Christopher Clark; 2008-101) – photos on file; specimen (mount) in private collection of Kevin D. Clark.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* (1)

2005 – one, definitive basic, male, circa 20 November, Baie Des Atocas, *Prescott and Russell* (Jean Buswell, also found by Henri Poupart, Jean-Claude Bermond; 2008-051) – photo on file; specimen (mount) in private collection of Jean Buswell.



Figure 2: Definitive basic male Barnacle Goose, Baie Des Atocas, *Prescott and Russell*, circa 20 November 2005. Photo: Jean Buswell.

This species has often been reported in Ontario, but the provenance of such sightings has always been questionable. However, the current individual was banded as a juvenile on 9 November 2004 in the Loch Gruinart RSPB reserve on the Isle of Islay, Scotland, so its origin can clearly be established. The bird, representing the first accepted record for Ontario, was shot travelling with Canada Geese.

Mottled Duck *Anas fulvigula* (1)

2008 – one, male, 1 May – 6 June, Hillman Marsh, *Essex* (Alan Wormington, Todd R. Pepper, Stephen T. Pike, found by Dean J. Ware; 2008-102) – photos on file.

The Committee considered the possibility that this individual, the first for the province, came from one of the established, introduced populations, such as the east coast (South Carolina) or Oklahoma. However, there was no evidence to suggest this to be the case. In addition, there is a well established pattern of vagrancy of birds from the species native range (Texas and the Gulf coast) into the mid- and upper Mississippi Valley (states such as Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and North Dakota). Furthermore, the introduced populations have been in place since the 1970s to early 1980s, so even if the bird was from these areas, it would still be considered a wild bird from an established population.

Figure 3: Mottled Duck at Hillman Marsh, *Essex*, from 1 May - 6 June 2008. Photo: Stephen T. Pike.



Figure 4: Definitive alternate male Tufted Duck at Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma, from 8-15 May 2008. Photo: Kirk Zufelt.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* (28)

2008 – one, definitive alternate, male, 8-15 May, Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma (David Bell, Doug Sheepway, Todd R. Pepper, Kirk Zufelt, found by Robert D. Knudsen; 2008-021) – photos on file.

Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus* North Only (21)

2008 – one, female, 20 May – 9 June, Wawa, Algoma (Kenneth A. Mcllwrick; 2008-081) – photos on file.
– two, adult females or juvenals/first basic, 22 October, Thunder Cape, Thunder Bay (John M. Woodcock, also found by Maureen Woodcock, Manuel Ballesteros, David J.T. Hussell, Erica H. Dunn; 2008-071) – photos on file.

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* North Only (17)

2008 – one, alternate, 20-30 May, Wawa, Algoma (Kenneth A. Mcllwrick; 2008-082) – photos on file.
– one, first alternate, 26-30 May, White River, Algoma (Kenneth A. Mcllwrick; 2008-083) – photos on file.
– one, alternate, 31 May, Moosonee, Cochrane (Ernest Hunter; 2008-031) – photo on file.

The Moosonee bird is a remarkable record, representing the first for the Hudson Bay Lowlands of Ontario.

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* (38)

2008 – one, juvenal, 9-12 November, Fifty Point Conservation Area, Hamilton/Niagara, to Van Wagners Beach, Hamilton and Burlington Beach, Halton (Brandon R. Holden, also found by Kevin A. McLaughlin; 2008-084).
– one, juvenal, 13 November, Fort Erie, Niagara (James M. Pawlicki; 2008-085).

Considering these were the only observations reported from Ontario in the fall of 2008, there is the possibility that both records refer to the same individual.

Frigatebird species *Fregata sp.* (3)

2008 – one, basic, male, 12 October, Colchester, Essex (Dana Ogglesby, G. Tom Hince, Paul D. Pratt, also found by Ken Ogglesby, Brad Smith, Bob Wickett; 2008-061) – photos on file.

This bird was submitted as a Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*), but based on the documentation received, the Committee was not able to assign a species. Details of this record have been published elsewhere; see Morin (2008) and Pratt (2008).

Adult males of this family are notoriously difficult to identify, and considering the documented vagrancy of this group including Lesser Frigatebird (*Fregata ariel*) at the mouth of the Detroit River, Michigan, on 11 September 2005 (Brennan and Shultz 2006), it is best not to assume that any frigatebird in Ontario is a Magnificent. The other two Ontario records of frigatebird species were 15 October, at Mississippi Lake, Lanark, and 30 October 1995, at Snow Road Station, Frontenac (the bird was not seen between these dates)(Dobos 1997) and 1-2 August 2005 at Port Elgin/Frenchman Bay, Bruce (Crins 2006). The two accepted records of Magnificent Frigatebird were 28 September 1988 at Point Edward, Lambton (Wormington and Curry 1990), and 28 October 1995 at Stoney Point, Essex (Dobos 1997).





Figure 5: Basic male frigatebird species seen at Colchester, Essex, on 12 October 2008. Photo: Dana Ogglesby.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* (67)

- 2008 – one, second basic, 28 April – 6 May, Long Point (Old Cut) (28 April) and Port Rowan (28 April – 6 May), *Norfolk* (Ted Maddeford, Tom Rook, Lea Haist, Jean Iron; 2008-011) – photos on file.
– one, definitive alternate, 16 May, Tilbury, Chatham-Kent (Robert Curry, also found by Glenda J. Slessor; 2008-041) – photos on file.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* North Only (3)

- 2007 – three, two definitive alternate and one juvenile, 2 July – 27 August, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (David Welbourne, Bert Harding, Nicholas G. Escott; 2008-001) – photos on file.

This record represents the first nesting of this species for northern Ontario, and only the third accepted record overall. The previous records were of single adults on 27 June 1984 at Wolverine Lake, *Cochrane* (Wormington 1987) and 18-20 May 1991 at Hazelwood Lake, *Thunder Bay* (Bain 1992).



Figure 6: Juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Grimsby, *Niagara*, on 24 August 2008.

Photo: Raymond J. Barlow.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* (41)

2008 – one, juvenal, 24 August, Grimsby, *Niagara* (Raymond J. Barlow; 2008-042) – photos on file.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (52)

2008 – three, definitive alternate, 8 May, Tilbury, *Chatham-Kent* (Robert Curry, also found by Glenda J. Slessor; 2008-044).

– one, definitive alternate, 13 May, Orillia, *Simcoe* (Barry J. Kinch; 2008-012) – photos on file.

Ibis species *Plegadis sp.* (44)

2007 – one, 10 November, Big Creek Marsh, *Norfolk* (Andrew Keaveney; 2008-022).

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* (59)

2008 – one, 1 April, Grimsby, *Niagara* (A. Geoff Carpentier, also found by Kim Baker, Brian Henshaw, Ian M. Richards, Terrie Smith; 2008-032).



(right) Figure 7: Definitive basic Black Vulture on 22 June 2008 at Tobermory, *Bruce*. Photo: Tom Thomas.

- one, 9-14 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Donald E. Perks, Gary A. Houghton, found by Richard Salembier; 2008-023) – photos on file.
 - one, basic, 15 June, Sarnia, *Lambton* (Robin Cunningham, also found by Elizabeth Link; 2008-033) – photo on file.
 - one, definitive basic, 22 June, Tobermory, *Bruce* (Tom Thomas, also found by Tim King; 2008-034) – photos on file.
 - one, 1 October, Victoria Harbour, *Simcoe* (James P. Coey; 2008-052).
- 1947 – one, basic, male, 21 July, St. Davids, *Niagara* (Marion Miles; 2008-111) – specimen (skin) in ROM: #74864.

Due to ill health, the Point Pelee bird was captured and taken to the Wings Avian Rehabilitation Centre in Amherstburg. Here it was determined to have a neurological disorder, possibly caused by botulism or West Nile Virus (Wormington 2009a). The St. Davids bird represents the first accepted record for the province (see Hope 1949; Baillie 1957; Beardslee & Mitchell 1965). An earlier Black Vulture was shot at Embro, *Oxford*, on 6 October 1941 but this specimen has since been lost (Wormington 2009b).

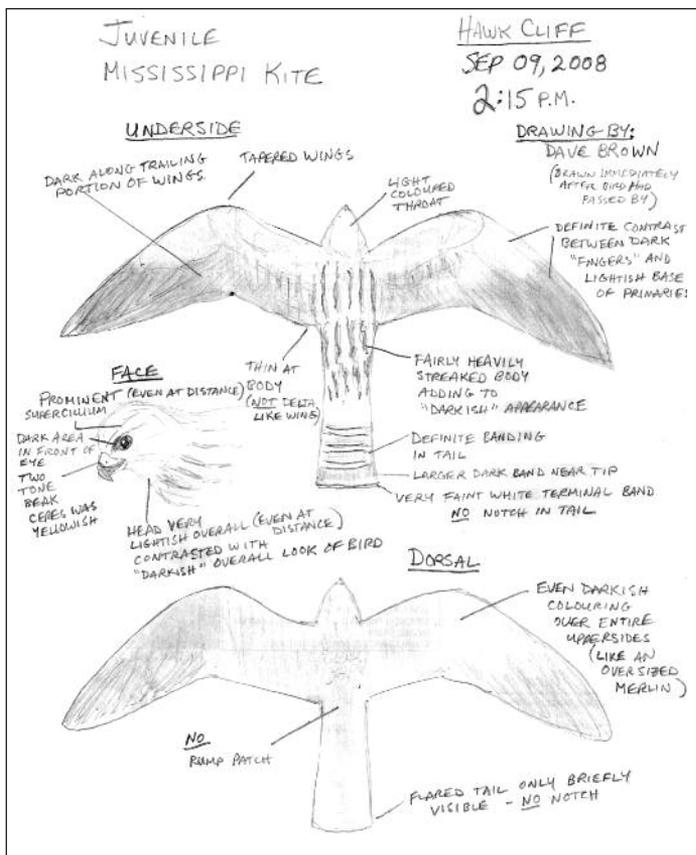


Figure 8: Mississippi Kite in juvenal plumage at Port Stanley, Elgin, on 9 September 2008.

Sketch:
David R. Brown.

Mississippi Kite *Ictinia mississippiensis* (34)

- 2008 – one, definitive basic, 5-6 May, Hillman Marsh (5 May) and Point Pelee National Park (6 May), *Essex* (Alan Wormington; 2008-091).
- one, juvenal, 9 September, Port Stanley, *Elgin* (Matt Oswald, David R. Brown, Colin Horstead, also found by Ronnie Goodhand, Brian Hawthorne, Wayne Parnall, D. Keith Sealy; 2008-053).

The Hawk Cliff bird represents the first fall record for the province, not surprising considering the species ongoing expansion to the north. The Hillman Marsh bird is the earliest for Ontario, with the previous earliest being 6 May, in 2000 (Roy 2001) and 2003 (Crins 2004), and both at Point Pelee National Park.

"Dark Morph" Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* (5)

- 2007 – one, definitive basic, 28 July, Northern Light Lake, *Thunder Bay* (Steve Boar; 2008-024)
- photos on file; specimen (mount) in private collection of Steve Boar.

This record, a bird found dead on the roadside, is the first accepted for northern Ontario. Only four previous reports have been accepted by the Committee: 18 August 1992 at Woodstock, *Oxford* (Dobos 1998), 19 September 2004 at Port Burwell and Port Stanley, *Elgin* (Crins 2007), 24 April 2007 at Grimsby, *Niagara*, and 26 April 2007 at Burlington, *Halton* (Richards 2008).



Figure 9: Definitive alternate Piping Plover at Oliphant, *Bruce*, from 5 June - 21 July 2008. *Photo: Brendan A. Toews.*

Snowy Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* (6)

2008 – one, alternate, male, 16-17 May, Long Point Provincial Park, *Norfolk* (Kenneth G. Burrell, Ron Ridout, found by Anna Calvert; 2008-045) – photos on file.

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* (67)

- 2008 – two (pair), definitive alternate male and female, two fledged juvenals, 4 May – 7 August, Sauble Beach, *Bruce* (Brendan A. Toews, found by Doug Pedwell; 2008-054) – photos on file.
- four (two pairs), definitive alternate males and females, eight fledged juvenals, 7 May – early August, Wasaga Beach, *Simcoe* (Frank Horvath, Sandra Horvath, David J. Milsom; 2008-062) – photos on file.
 - two (pair), definitive alternate male and female, one fledged juvenal, 5 June – 21 July, Oliphant, *Bruce* (Brendan A. Toews, found by Stewart Nutt; 2008-055) – photos on file.
 - two, definitive alternate, 4 July, Sauble Beach, *Bruce* (Brendan A. Toews, also found by Kim J. Toews; 2008-072) – photos on file.

The pair at Sauble Beach was the same breeding pair as in 2007 (see Richards 2008, Toews *et al.* 2008). One of the chicks was depredated on 7 July, while the male was killed by a Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) on 22 July. The female departed south on 14 July, while the second juvenile remained by itself to 7 August. The Oliphant birds were banded previously revealing the following history: the female hatched in 2006 on North Manitou Island and nested in 2007 at Ludington State Park, Michigan, while the male was banded as a chick at Sturgeon Bay, Michigan, in 2007. The female left Oliphant on 7 July, while the male and juvenile remained to 21 July. Only one of the eight Wasaga Beach chicks survived, with four dying during a severe thunderstorm on 22 June. A separate pair of adults, one of which was colour-banded, appeared at Sauble Beach for one day only, on 4 July.

Figure 10: Curlew Sandpiper in juvenal plumage at Fort Erie, *Niagara*, from 28 September – 14 October 2008. Photo: Jean Iron.



American Avocet
Recurvirostra americana

North Only

South Before 2000 (71)

2008 – one, alternate, 30 May, Wawa, *Algoma* (Kenneth A. McLwrick; 2008-086) – photos on file.

Willet *Tringa semipalmatus* North Only (16)

2008 – one, 10 May, Marathon, *Thunder Bay* (Greg Stroud; 2008-025) – photo on file.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* (27)

2008 – one, juvenal, 28 September – 14 October, Fort Erie, *Niagara* (Willie D'Anna, Sandra Eadie, Jean Iron, found by Peter Yoerg; 2008-063) – photos on file.

Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea* (10)

2008 – one, definitive basic, 28-31 January, Niagara Falls, *Niagara* (Winnie Poon, found by Brandon R. Holden; 2008-047).

This bird was originally discovered on the New York side of the Niagara River above the Falls, from the Ontario side, on 27 January by Willie D'Anna, Jean Iron, Kevin A. McLaughlin and Betsy Potter. The bird remained to 1 February on the New York side.

Mew Gull *Larus canus* (20)

2008 – one, definitive basic, 6 December, Queenston, *Niagara* (Jean Iron, Willie D'Anna, Kevin A. McLaughlin, also found by Ronald J. Pittaway, Betsy Potter; 2008-092) – photo on file.

Plumage characteristics seemed to be inconsistent with the expected *brachyrhynchus* subspecies, and even suggested a Kamchatka Gull (*L.c. kamtschatschensis*), which would be a first for the province. However, the Committee felt the documentation did not allow a subspecific identity to be assigned.

California Gull *Larus californicus* (54)

2008 – one, definitive alternate, *albertaensis*, 12-20 March, Rockton, *Hamilton* (Robert Curry, Kevin A. McLaughlin, Brandon R. Holden; 2008-046) – photos on file.

– one, definitive alternate, *albertaensis*, 1 April, Rockton, *Hamilton* (Brandon R. Holden; 2008-036) – photos on file.

– one, first basic, 1-4 November, Orillia, *Simcoe* (Kirk Zufelt; 2008-073) – photos on file.

– one, second basic, 23 November – 13 December, Queenston, *Niagara* (Willie D'Anna, Jean Iron, also found by Betsy Potter; 2008-093) – photo on file.

It was determined that the two occurrences at Rockton pertain to different birds, based on distinct plumage differences.

Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus* (6)

2008/09 – one, definitive basic, 13 December – 24 January, Niagara Falls, *Niagara* (Jean Iron, Willie D'Anna, Kevin A. McLaughlin, Scott Whittle, also found by Ronald J. Pittaway, Betsy Potter; 2008-094) – photos on file.

2007 – one, third basic, 20-27 November, Woito, *Renfrew* (Christopher R. Michener, Bruce M. Di Labio, Winnie Poon, also found by Manson Fleguel; 2008-002) – photos on file.

The four previous records were at Niagara Falls, *Niagara*, from 24 November to 29 December 1992 (Bain 1993), Toronto, *Toronto*, from 2-9 January 1999 (Roy 2000), Wheatley Harbour and Hillman Marsh, *Essex*, from 22-26 January 2006 (Crins 2007), and Niagara Falls, *Niagara*, from 2-13 December 2006 (Richards 2008).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* South Only (14)

2008 – one, definitive alternate, 29 May, Cobourg, *Northumberland* (Margaret J.C. Bain, also found by William D. Gilmour, R. Douglas McRae, Richard Pope; 2008-026).

This record fits the usual migration pattern of this species in spring in southern Ontario.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* (30)

2008 – one, 14 May – 1 June, Lake on the Mountain (14-15 May) and Prince Edward Point (23 May – 1 June), *Prince Edward* (Margaret J.C. Bain, Christopher J. Escott, found by Pamela Stagg; 2008-027) – photos on file.

– one, 27 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock; 2008-064) – photos on file.

– one, 20 July, Oliphant, *Bruce* (Robert Curry, also found by Barry Playford, Joanne Playford, Glenda J. Slessor; 2008-048) – photos on file.

– one, 21 July – 18 October, St. Catharines, *Niagara* (Paul E. Chapman, Kayo J. Roy, Scott A. Watson, Sandra Eadie, Brian R. Ahara, also found by Sue J.H. Chapman; 2008-056) – photos on file.

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina* (3)

2008 – one, 1 November, Long Point (Squires Ridge), *Norfolk* (Stuart A. Mackenzie, also found by Ross W. Wood; 2008-095) – photos on file.

This record is only the third for the province, and the first for the south. The two previous records were on 29 October 1968 at Red Rock, *Thunder Bay* (Wormington 1987) and 14 August 2002 at Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Crins 2003).

Figure 11: Juvenile Common Ground-Dove at Long Point (Squires Ridge), Norfolk, on 1 November 2008.

Photo: Stuart A. Mackenzie.





Figure 12: Burrowing Owl, at Pelee Island, *Essex*, on 25 April 2008 . *Photo: Michael V.A. Burrell.*

Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia* (6)

2008 – one, 25 April, Pelee Island, *Essex* (Michael V.A. Burrell, Kenneth G. Burrell; 2008-013)
– photos on file.

This occurrence represents only the fourth record for southern Ontario, and the first in the province since 1995. The previously accepted records for Ontario were 7-8 May 1982 at Kleinburg, *York* (James 1983), 4 October 1986 at Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Wormington 1987), 27 May 1989 at Walpole Island, *Lambton* (Wormington and Curry 1990), 19-24 April 1991 at Arnprior, *Renfrew* (Bain 1992), and 13 May 1995 at Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Dobos 1996).

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya* (12)

2008 – one, 28 April, Terrace Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Susan Bryan, Michael Bryan; 2008-014) – photos on file.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus* (54)

2008 – one, definitive alternate, male, 5 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Peter Sproule, found by Kay Janssens, Sharon Jorgensen; 2008-015) – photos on file.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana* (8)

2008 – one, 5 October, Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (Dennis Smyth; 2008-103) – photo on file.
– one, first basic, nominate *savana*, 22 October, north of Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington, Todd R. Pepper, Robert Epstein, Stephen T. Pike, found by Brad M. Ouellette; 2008-104) – photos on file.

The photographic documentation for the Point Pelee bird shows the strongly emarginated outer primary and pale back that is indicative of the nominate savana subspecies. These two fall records are typical of this species in northeastern North America, an austral migrant that breeds in temperate South America during our winter months, and migrates north to “winter” in more equatorial regions. The only accepted spring record of this species for Ontario was 26 April 2004 at Stouffville, *York* (Crins 2005).

Bell's Vireo *Vireo bellii* (10)

2007 – one, first basic, nominate *bellii*, 7 September (not 21 September as published by Bain 2008), Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* ([Maureen Woodcock](#), also found by Alana Demko, Calvin Knorr, Belen Perez; 2008-114) – photos on file.

This is the first record for northern Ontario, and represents the most northerly occurrence of the species in North America.

Figure 13: Say's Phoebe at Terrace Bay, *Thunder Bay*, on 28 April 2008. *Photo: Michael Bryan.*





Figure 14: Fork-tailed Flycatcher north of Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*, on 22 October 2008.

Photo: Robert Epstein.

Fish Crow *Corvus ossifragus* (12)

2008 – two, basic, 7-8 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington, found by D. Keith Sealy; 2008-096).

This record fits the pattern of occurrence in Ontario, with Point Pelee having had all but two of the accepted records, and all falling between 21 April and 29 May. The only accepted records outside Point Pelee were at Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent*, on 20 May 2000 (Crins 2007) and 14 May 2003 (Crins 2004).

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva* (61)

- 2008** – two, 8 November, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* ([Alan Wormington](#), [Blake A. Mann](#), also found by Kevin A. McLaughlin; 2008-105).
 four, 8 November, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* ([Blake A. Mann](#), [Alan Wormington](#), also found by Kevin A. McLaughlin; 2008-106).
 – two, 8 November, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* ([Blake A. Mann](#), [Alan Wormington](#), also found by Kevin A. McLaughlin; 2008-107).
 – three, 9 November, Turkey Point, *Norfolk* ([Kenneth G. Burrell](#), also found by James G. Burrell; 2008-065).
 – one, 9 November, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* ([Alan Wormington](#), also found by Richard P. Carr, Stephen T. Pike; 2008-108).
 – two, 9-10 November, Erieau, *Chatham-Kent* (Michael J. Nelson, found by Irene Woods; 2008-113)
 – photo on file.
 – three, 10 November, Niagara Falls, *Niagara* (Brett Fried, found by John E. Black, Daniel R. Salisbury; 2008-066).

– one, basic, 10-17 November (but not observed between these dates), Prince Edward Point, *Prince Edward* (Bruce E. Ripley; 2008-076) – photos on file.

2003 – one, 9 November, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Randy P. Horvath, also found by Robert A. Horvath; 2008-075).

The birds at Point Pelee on 8 November were all actively migrating, allowing the Committee to concur with the observers that each group represented different birds. As in recent falls, this species made a strong showing in 2008, further documenting its dramatic range expansion. Of the two birds at Eriean, only one remained to 10 November (the other was killed by a feral cat on 9 November).

Rock Wren *Salpinctes obsoletus* (5)

2008 – one, 15 November, Marathon, *Thunder Bay* (Martha Allen, Greg Stroud, also found by Christine Vance; 2008-078) – photos on file.

The four previously accepted records were 6-7 December 1964 at Port Weller, *Niagara* (Roy 2001), 12 February – 5 March 1989 at Etobicoke, *Toronto* (Wormington and Curry 1990), 1-6 May 1993 at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Pittaway 1995), and 4-7 May 2004 at Elk Lake, *Timiskaming* (Crins 2005).

Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi* South Only After 2000 (66)

2008/09 – one, basic, 20 December – late March, Parry Sound, *Parry Sound* (Stan Fairchild, Ted Krug, also found by Liz Simms et al.; 2008-115) – photo on file.

2008 – one, 16-23 February, Point Petre, *Prince Edward* (R. Douglas McRae; 2008-004) – photo on file.
– one, 21 May, Oxley, *Essex* (Michael Stoakes, Sherry Leonardo, Karen Stair, also found by Becky Selzer, Terry Stair, Elizabeth Stoakes; 2008-016) – photos on file.

2007/08 – one, first basic, 21 December – 3 April, Nepean, *Ottawa* (Francine Streeting, Tony F.M. Beck; 2008-003) – photos on file.

A second bird joined the Parry Sound bird in January 2009, also remaining until late March.

Figure 15: First basic Bell's Vireo, at Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay*, on 7 September 2007.

Photo: Maureen Woodcock.



Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata memorabilis/auduboni* (10)

- 2008 – one, alternate, male, 25 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Catherine L. Carroll; 2008-028).
– one, definitive basic, male, 13 December, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington; 2008-109).

Black-throated Gray Warbler *Dendroica nigrescens* (15)

- 2008 – one, basic, male, 23 November – 4 December, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Blake A. Mann, also found by James T. Burk; 2008-087) – photos on file.
2007 – one, first basic, female, 10-16 December, Port Burwell, *Elgin* (Ron Ridout, Michael V.A. Burrell, Sandra Horvath, found by Aaron Allensen; 2008-017) – photos on file.

Townsend's Warbler *Dendroica townsendi* (7)

- 2008 – one, definitive alternate, male, 3 August, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, also found by Maureen Woodcock; 2008-038) – photos on file.
2007 – one, female or first alternate male, 5 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Gary Sadler; 2008-005) – photo on file.

The Thunder Cape record is the first for northern Ontario and also represents the first accepted fall record for the province. These two birds are also the first accepted records since 2000 (Roy 2001). All the accepted spring records fall between 20 April and 18 May.

Kirtland's Warbler *Dendroica kirtlandii* (40)

- 2008 – one, alternate, male, 15 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Brandon R. Holden, Bruce M. Di Labio; 2008-059) – photos on file.
2005 – one, alternate, male, 9-14 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Darlene Friedman, John E. Schuman; 2008-057) – photos on file.

Two birds were present at the same time at Point Pelee National Park in May 2005. Numerous photographs were obtained of the two, but for the majority of photos, the Committee was unable to assign them to a specific individual; thus one of the birds remains undocumented

Figure 16: Definitive alternate male Townsend's Warbler at Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay*, on 3 August 2008.
Photo: John M. Woodcock.





Figure 17: Alternate male Western Tanager at Sault Ste. Marie, *Algoma*, from 7-8 May 2008.

Photo: Kenneth A. McIlwrick.

Prairie Warbler *Dendroica discolor* North Only (4)

- 2008 – one, first alternate, male, 29 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock; 2008-067)
– photos on file.

This record was only the fourth for northern Ontario, and the third for the Thunder Cape Bird Observatory. The other records were 26 September 1993 at Thunder Cape, Thunder Bay (Dobos 1996), 27 May 1998 at Atikokan, *Rainy River* (Dobos 1999), and 20 June 2006 at Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (Grins 2007).

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana* (28)

- 2008 – one, first alternate, male, 24-27 April, Pass Lake, *Thunder Bay* (Douglas D. Thomas; 2008-019)
– photos on file.
- one, first alternate, male, 4 May, Rondeau Provincial Park, *Chatham-Kent* (Blake A. Mann, also found by Stephen R. Charbonneau; 2008-020).
 - one, alternate, male, 7-8 May, Sault Ste. Marie, *Algoma* (Kenneth A. McIlwrick, found by Jack Jones; 2008-040) – photos on file.
 - one, first alternate, male, 7-12 May, Thunder Bay, *Thunder Bay* (Gayle Rowland, Michael Rowland; 2008-039) – photo on file.
 - one, female, 16-18 May, Sunshine, *Thunder Bay* (Jeff Robinson; 2008-049) – photo on file.
- 2007 – one, basic, 2-7 November, Long Point (Old Cut), *Norfolk* (Ron Ridout, found by Diane Salter and Fergus Nicoll; 2008-006) – photo on file.

2008 was a remarkable year for this species, with five records from just the spring. The previous high number of accepted records in one year was three birds in 1995. Of the 28 accepted records for the province to date, 17 have occurred in spring and 10 in fall/early winter; of the spring records, all but one have occurred in May



Figure 18: Spotted Towhee at Point Pelee National Park, *Essex*, from 11 November 2008 - 26 March 2009.
 Photo: Alan Wormington.

Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo chlorurus* (6)

2007 – one, first basic, 19-22 September (not 24 August to 22 September as published by Bain 2008), Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock, also found by Alana Demko, Elizabeth Donadio, Jeff Moker, Maureen Woodcock; 2008-007) – photos on file.

This was only the second record of this species for northern Ontario. The first record was also at Thunder Cape, on 10 June 2006 (Crins 2007). The other accepted records for the province were late March – 18 April 1954 at Welland, *Niagara*, 30 March – 1 April 1954 at London, *Middlesex*, 24 November 1956 at Terra Cotta, *Peel*, and late October 1985 to 24 April 1986 at Windsor, *Essex* (Wormington 1987).

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus* (22)

2008/09 – one, definitive basic, male, arcticus, 11 November – 26 March, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Alan Wormington, Stephen T. Pike, Frank Horvath, Sandra Horvath; 2008-110) – photos on file.

2006/07 – one, definitive basic, male, arcticus, late September – 14 March, Kenora, *Kenora* (Cindy Gilbertson, Carolle Eady; 2008-029) – photos on file.

Eastern Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* North Only (7)

2008 – one, basic, male, 6-14 November, Rosspoint, *Thunder Bay* (Harold G. Smith; 2008-088) – photo on file.

– one, basic, female, 23 November – 29 December, Nipigon, *Thunder Bay* (Gordon J. Laird; 2008-097) – photos on file.

– one, basic, female, 12-15 December, Rosspoint, *Thunder Bay* (Colleen Kenney; 2008-089) – photos on file.

Figure 19: Definitive alternate male Lark Bunting at Eagle River, *Kenora*, from 25-30 May 2007.

Photo: *Carolle Eady*.



Field Sparrow *Spizela pusilla*

North Only (17)

- 2008 – one, first alternate, 12 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock; 2008-068) – photos on file.

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus* (82)

- 2008 – one, 5-9 May, Karalash Corners, *Algoma* (Kenneth A. McIlwrick; 2008-090) – photos on file.
– one, first alternate, 13 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock; 2008-069) – photo on file.
– one, first alternate, male, 24-28 May, Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* (John M. Woodcock; 2008-070) – photos on file.
- 2007 – two, males, 14 May – mid June, St. Williams, *Norfolk* (Karl Egressy, Rick Lauzon, Derek Lyon; 2008-050) – photos on file.
– one, 19 May, Michipicoten Island (Schafer Bay), *Thunder Bay* (Greg Cleary; 2008-098).

Both the birds at St. Williams were singing (territorial) males. Another singing bird was seen nearby at St. Williams on 12 May 2007 (see Richards 2008) but is treated as a separate record since there is no evidence to support otherwise.

Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys* (26)

- 2008 – one, first alternate, male, 11 May, Point Pelee National Park, *Essex* (Gordon Atkins, Andrew Keaveney; 2008-060) – photos on file.
- 2007 – one, alternate, male, 9-10 May, Ruthven, *Essex* (Margaret Brackell, also found by Howard Brackell; 2008-099) – photos on file.
– one, definitive alternate, male, 25-30 May, Eagle River, *Kenora* (Carolle Eady; 2008-008) – photos on file.

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea* (68)

- 2008 – one, definitive basic, male, 15-18 December, Lion's Head, *Bruce* (Mary Morgan, Clive Morgan; 2008-116) – photos on file.
– one, definitive alternate, male, 12-18 May, Squaw Bay (Pass Lake), *Thunder Bay* (Lynn Quackenbush, found by June Huston; 2008-079) – photos on file.

The Lion's Head bird is the latest fall record for the province.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch *Leucosticte tephrocotis* (12)

- 2008 – one, basic, male, nominate *tephrocotis*, 8 March, Crozier, *Rainy River* (Shirley A. Skirten, Wayne R. Skirten; 2008-080) – photo on file.
- 2006/07 – one, basic, nominate *tephrocotis*, 16 December – early March, Red Rock, *Thunder Bay* (Brian D. Ratcliff, found by Judy Swanson; 2008-030) – photo on file.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* (4)

- 2008 – one, 10 May, Port Burwell, *Elgin* (Aaron Allensen; 2008-100) – photos on file.
- The three previous records of this species were 16-18 February 1994 in Eastnor Township, *Bruce* (Pittaway 1995), 20 May 1999 at Sturgeon Creek, *Essex* (Roy 2000), and 24 August 2003 at Leamington, *Essex* (Crins 2004).

NOT ACCEPTED RECORDS

Identification Accepted, Origin Questionable

Birds in this category are considered by the Committee to be correctly identified, but their origin is questionable. These birds may have escaped or may have been released from captivity. However, if new evidence suggesting wild origin becomes available, such reports may be reconsidered by the Committee.

- 2007 European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*), one, 5-6 November, Englehart, *Timiskaming* (Michael Werner, found by Pam Yantha; 2008-010) – photos on file.

The sightings of Eurasian songbirds, such as European Goldfinch, continue although there is still no evidence to suggest that they are now established in the province.

Identification Uncertain

The documentation received for the following reports generally was found not to be detailed enough to eliminate similar species unequivocally. In many cases, Committee members felt that the species being described probably was correctly identified, but that the details provided in the report, perhaps due to factors such as the conditions during the observation, were insufficient. It should be noted that any of these reports may be re-submitted if additional documentation becomes available.

- 2008 Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, one, 4-5 September, Windsor, *Essex* (2008-043).
- Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*), one, 27 July, Townsend, *Norfolk* (2008-035).
- Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*), one, circa mid-July – 15 August, Port Robinson, *Niagara* (2008-037).
- Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*), 23 April, Grimsby, *Niagara* (2008-018).
- 2005 Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*), one, 15 May, Windsor, *Essex* (2008-074).
- Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), one, 1 June, Long Point (Old Cut), *Norfolk* – photos on file (2008-009).

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